

1. (currently amended): An apparatus for accessing and displaying multimedia content, comprising:

(a) database means for storing multimedia content records and associated references to media files for a multimedia presentation; and

(b) software engine means, executable on a computer, for seamlessly accessing a content record in said database means according to a record index value and locating and displaying associated media elements referred to in [[the]] said indexed content record;

wherein said software engine means is configured for interpreting embedded instructions within custom tags of said content record that direct access to other content records in said database; and

wherein said software engine means is configured for generating multiple windows and controlling within which window the media elements referred to in said content records are to be displayed~~[[.]]~~;

wherein at least one of said multimedia content records includes at least one custom tag;

wherein said software engine is configured to read said custom tag;

wherein said custom tag instructs said engine to fetch a corresponding multimedia content record from said database;

wherein said software engine reads said multimedia content record; and

wherein said at least said portion of said content page is passed to an interface program for display.

2. (currently amended): An apparatus for accessing and displaying multimedia content, comprising:

a database containing multimedia content records and references to media files for a multimedia presentation;

a software engine, executable on a computer, configured for seamlessly accessing a content record in said database according to a record index value and locating and displaying media elements referred to in [[that]] said content record; and programming executable on said software engine for,

interpreting embedded instructions within custom tags of said content record for directing access to other content records in said database, generating multiple display windows within which content records are to be displayed,

controlling which window of said multiple windows that [[the]] media elements referred to in said content records are to be displayed[.];  
wherein at least one of said multimedia content records includes at least one

custom tag;

wherein said software engine is configured to read said custom tag;

wherein said custom tag instructs said engine to fetch a corresponding multimedia content record from said database;

wherein said software engine reads said multimedia content record; and

wherein at least said portion of said content page is passed to an interface program for display.

3. (currently amended): An apparatus for accessing and displaying multimedia content, comprising:

a programmable data processor;

a database containing multimedia content records and references to media files for a multimedia presentation; and

programming associated with said programmable data processor for, accessing, seamlessly, a content record in said database according to a record index value,

locating and displaying media elements referred to in said content record, interpreting embedded instructions within custom tags of said content record for directing access to other content records in said database,

generating multiple display windows within which content records are to be displayed,

controlling which window of said multiple windows that [[the]] media elements referred to in said content records are to be displayed[.];

wherein at least one of said multimedia content records includes at least one custom tag;

wherein said software engine is configured to read said custom tag;  
wherein said custom tag instructs said engine to fetch a corresponding  
multimedia content record from said database;  
wherein said software engine reads said multimedia content record; and  
wherein said at least said portion of said content page is passed to an interface  
program for display.

4. (currently amended): A computer program for accessing and displaying multimedia content, comprising:

a set of instructions stored on a media accessible by a computer and executable as programming on said computer;

wherein said programming is configured for,

seamlessly accessing a content record in a database, according to a record index value, said records containing HTML content and custom tags readable by said programming,

wherein one or more of said custom tags point to other content records in the database,

locating and displaying media elements within one of multiple windows generated by said programming and referred to in [[that]] said content record[.];

wherein at least one of said multimedia content records includes at least one custom tag;

wherein said software engine is configured to read said custom tag;

wherein said custom tag instructs said engine to fetch a corresponding multimedia content record from said database;

wherein said software engine reads said multimedia content record; and

wherein said at least said portion of said content page is passed to an interface program for display.

5. (currently amended): A multimedia delivery apparatus, comprising:  
(a) a database containing multimedia content records and references to media files for a multimedia presentation;

(b) a software delivery engine associated with said database and executable on a computer for seamlessly displaying content records accessed according to a record index value into said database; and

(c) programming within said delivery engine for,  
generating multiple display windows,  
interpreting custom tags embedded in said content records of said database, one or more of said custom tags pointing to other content records in said database, and

locating and displaying within one of said multiple display windows, said content record, regardless of whether said media elements are stored on a local storage device or stored remotely on an Internet server to provide a single seamless multimedia application for displaying media elements[.];

wherein at least one of said multimedia content records includes at least one custom tag;

wherein said software engine is configured to read said custom tag;

wherein said custom tag instructs said engine to fetch a corresponding multimedia content record from said database;

wherein said software engine reads said multimedia content record; and

wherein said at least said portion of said content page is passed to an interface program for display.

6. (currently amended): A method for displaying multimedia content, comprising:  
storing in a database, multimedia content records and references to media files for a multimedia presentation;

seamlessly accessing, using a software engine executable on a computer, a content record in said database accessed according to a record index value;

interpreting custom tags embedded in said content ~~records~~ record of said database, one or more of said custom tags pointing to other content records in said database;

generating multiple display windows; and

locating and displaying media elements referred to in said content record within one or more of said multiple display windows[.];

wherein at least one of said multimedia content records includes at least one custom tag;

wherein said software engine is configured to read said custom tag;

wherein said custom tag instructs said engine to fetch a corresponding multimedia content record from said database;

wherein said software engine reads said multimedia content record; and

wherein said at least said portion of said content page is passed to an interface program for display.

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended): An apparatus as recited in claim ~~[[7]]~~ 1:

wherein said software engine generates a temporary local copy of at least a portion of a content page from ~~[[that]]~~ said multimedia content record for display; and

wherein said displayed content page contains at least one custom tag for further navigation.

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended): An apparatus as recited in claim ~~[[9]]~~ 2:

wherein said software engine generates a temporary local copy of at least a portion of a content page from ~~[[that]]~~ said multimedia content record for display; and

wherein said displayed content page contains at least one custom tag for further navigation.

11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended): An apparatus as recited in claim ~~[[11]]~~ 3:

wherein said software engine generates a temporary local copy of at least a portion of a content page from ~~[[that]]~~ said multimedia content record for display; and

wherein said displayed content page contains at least one custom tag for further navigation.

13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended): An apparatus as recited in claim ~~[[13]]~~ 4:  
wherein said software engine generates a temporary local copy of at least a portion of a content page from ~~[[that]]~~ said multimedia content record for display; and  
wherein said displayed content page contains at least one custom tag for further navigation.

15. (canceled)

16. (currently amended): An apparatus as recited in claim ~~[[15]]~~ 5:  
wherein said software engine generates a temporary local copy of at least a portion of a content page from ~~[[that]]~~ said multimedia content record for display; and  
wherein said displayed content page contains at least one custom tag for further navigation.

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended): A method as recited in claim ~~[[17]]~~ 6:  
wherein said software engine generates a temporary local copy of at least a portion of a content page from ~~[[that]]~~ said multimedia content record for display; and  
wherein said displayed content page contains at least one custom tag for further navigation.

19. (currently amended): An apparatus for accessing and displaying multimedia content, comprising:

a database containing multimedia content records and references to media files for a multimedia presentation;

a software engine, executable on a computer for seamlessly accessing a content record in said database according to a record index value and locating and displaying media elements referred to in ~~[[that]]~~ said content record; and

programming executable on said software engine for,  
interpreting embedded instructions within custom tags of said content  
record for directing access to other content records in said database,  
generating multiple display windows within which content records are to  
be displayed, and  
controlling which window of said multiple windows that [[the]] media  
elements referred to in said content records are to be displayed;  
wherein at least one of said multimedia content records includes at least one  
custom tag;  
wherein said software engine is configured to read said custom tag;  
wherein said custom tag instructs said engine to fetch a corresponding  
multimedia content record from said database;  
wherein said software engine reads said multimedia content record;  
wherein said software engine generates a temporary local copy of at least a  
portion of a content page from [[that]] said multimedia content record for display; and  
wherein said at least said portion of said content page is passed to an interface  
program for display.

20. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said  
seamless accessing of content records in said database does not rely on the execution  
of individual components of programs which operate independently to display the  
various media content while not providing for any integration of the applications.

21. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein said  
seamless accessing of content records in said database does not rely on the execution  
of individual components of programs which operate independently to display the  
various media content while not providing for any integration of the applications.

22. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein said  
seamless accessing of content records in said database does not rely on the execution  
of individual components of programs which operate independently to display the  
various media content while not providing for any integration of the applications.

23. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 4, wherein said seamless accessing of content records in said database does not rely on the execution of individual components of programs which operate independently to display the various media content while not providing for any integration of the applications.

24. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 19, wherein said seamless accessing of content records in said database does not rely on the execution of individual components of programs which operate independently to display the various media content while not providing for any integration of the applications.

25. (previously presented): A multimedia delivery engine implemented as executable routines on a computer readable media for the seamless delivery of varied multimedia content to a user, comprising:

(a) a reader routine configured to access records within a database according to a record index value;

wherein said records comprise HTML content and custom tags configured for reading by said reader routine;

(b) a display window routine for generating multiple display windows within which record content is displayed;

(c) a writing routine configured to write HTML text content of said HTML record content to a temporary cache file adapted for being read by an interface program for displaying said HTML text content in a display window;

(d) a custom HTML tag processing routine configured to,

(i) locate records in said database in response to a record index or a custom tag within a record that points to another record of said database, copy record content to a temporary cache file, and display HTML content of said temporary cache file inclusive of graphics and hyperlinks contained therein,

(ii) locate and seamlessly display images located within local storage devices within an illustration window in response to a custom tag directed at local storage resources,



(iii) load and run media components according to a custom tag from links or links within database records that are located in a local storage media or over a network connection as determined by said processing routine,

(iv) load web server-based content according to an additional custom tag; and

(e) wherein varied multimedia content from local and remote storage and content of additional database records may be accessed and displayed as one seamless multimedia application.

26. (previously presented): A multimedia delivery engine as recited in claim 25, wherein said varied multimedia content comprises both high-bandwidth media for storage across local devices and current and time-sensitive content for storage remotely on an Internet server.

27. (previously presented): A multimedia delivery engine as recited in claim 26, wherein said high-bandwidth media comprises content retrieved from at least one mass storage device.

28. (previously presented): A multimedia delivery engine as recited in claim 25, wherein said multimedia delivery engine does not rely on the execution of individual components of programs which operate independently to display the various media content while not providing for any integration of the applications.

29. (previously presented): A method of delivering varied multimedia from a network enabled computer system in response to the contents of a database, comprising:

(a) accessing HTML record content within a database according to a record index value;

(b) writing HTML text content of said HTML record content to a temporary cache file adapted for being read by an interface program for displaying said HTML text content in one of multiple display windows;

(c) locating records in said database in response to a custom tag pointing to said database, copying record content to a temporary cache file, and controlling which window of said multiple windows for displaying HTML content of said temporary cache file which can include graphics and hyperlinks;

(d) locating and displaying images located within local storage devices within an illustration window in response to a custom tag directed at local storage resources;

(e) interpreting embedded instructions within custom tags of said content record for directing access to other content records in said database;

(f) loading and running media components according to a custom tag from links or links within database records that may be located in a local storage media or over a network connection; and

(g) loading web server-based content according to an additional custom tag;

(h) wherein varied multimedia content from local and remote storage and content of additional database records may be accessed and displayed as one seamless multimedia application.

30. (previously presented): A method as recited in claim 29, wherein said varied multimedia content comprises both high-bandwidth media for storage across local devices and current and time-sensitive content for storage remotely on an Internet server.

31. (previously presented): A method as recited in claim 29, wherein said high-bandwidth media comprises content retrieved from at least one mass storage device.

32. (previously presented): A method as recited in claim 29, wherein said method does not rely on the execution of individual components of programs which operate independently to display the various media content while not providing for any integration of the applications.

33. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein said programming associated within said programmable data processor comprises a

multimedia engine configured to locate and display all of the media elements referred to within a given content page record of said database file.

34. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 33, wherein said multimedia engine is configured to display media elements within one or more selected windows within said multimedia presentation.

35. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 34, wherein said multimedia engine is configured to display images within a main normal width display window or an expanded width window.

36. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 35, wherein said multimedia engine is configured to display images that are too large to comfortably fit either in said main normal width display window, or in said main display expanded width window, and can be stored in a database and displayed in a separate illustration window.

37. (currently amended): An apparatus for providing multimedia tutorials, comprising:

a database containing multimedia content records and references to media files for a multimedia presentation;

a software engine, executable on a computer, said software engine seamlessly accessing a content record according to a record index value in said database and locating and displaying media elements referred to in [[that]] said content record;

programming executable on said software engine for,

interpreting embedded instructions within custom tags of said content record for directing access to other content records in said database,

generating multiple display windows within which content records are to be displayed, and

controlling which window of said multiple windows that [[the]] media elements referred to in said content records are to be displayed;

wherein said software engine does not rely on the execution of individual components or programs which operate independently to display the various media content; and

a user interface upon which content is displayed by said software engine;  
a toolbar displayed by said software engine having buttons representing the media elements available within said content record[.];

wherein said toolbar provides controls for video media elements, audio media elements, and demonstration media elements;

wherein said toolbar comprises sequence control buttons for selecting tutorial positioning within said content records; and

wherein said toolbar comprises a map control button for selecting a map window which displays the current position of the tutorial in the database index as a highlight within said map window, and is configured for allowing the user to select a topic within said map window which the database index is to be adjusted.

38. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 37, wherein said software engine includes a reader portion that locates and displays all of the media elements referred to in [[that]] said record of said database.

39. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 37, wherein said media content comprises video, audio, animation, or images.

Claims 40-42 (canceled)

43. (currently amended): An apparatus as recited in claim 42 37, wherein said map window displays tutorial content in a hierarchical form and which is configured for being expanded or collapsed to provide a selected level of detail about the content.

44. (previously presented): An apparatus as recited in claim 37, further comprising a demonstration window displayed by said software engine that may be opened for demonstrating a process being described in said tutorial.